WVCW LISTENING AUDIENCE SURVEY

DECEMBER 1976

Station Management

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

MASS COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

A SURVEY OF THE LISTENING AUDIENCE OF WVCW

A STUDY PREPARED FOR WVCW RADIO

and PUBLIC OPINION 425

by

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PURPOSE OF STUDY

WVCW is Virginia Commonwealth University's campus radio station. The station broadcasts at 25 watts of power and is piped into University buildings on carrier cable. The purpose of this study was to determine how much of WVCW's possible potential audience listen to the station, where they regularly listen to WVCW, and what percentage of the potential audience is lost to other stations in the area. In addition an effort was made to elicit comments from sample members about the station, in general, and remarks pertaining to possible programming improvements. The study was initiated at the request of Mr. Edward B. Hazelwood, III, station manager of WVCW.

THE SAMPLE

As mentioned previously, WVCW is a carrier current radio station. There are a combined number of 16 VCU dormitories (11 of which are on the West or Academic campus--the remaining 5 dormitories are on the MCV or East campus); in addition, there are temporary residence facilities at the William Byrd Hotel and the Governor's Square Apartments. Of these 18 lodging facilities provided by Virginia Commonwealth University, WVCW has access to only four at the present time. Including monitors in all cafeterias on campus, working transmitters in Rhoads Hall, Johnson Hall, Lafeyette Hall, and Chalkley House (all of which are located on the West Campus) provide the basis for WVCW's potential audience.

Of the four dormitories equipped with WVCW transmitters, two (Johnson and Rhoads Halls) house over 500 students, almost entirely consisting of females (each dormitory has two male residence floors). The other two transmitter-equipped residence hall are men's dormitories which house less than 100 students. Since the two lodgings in each group are so clearly similar in their critical make-up, for the purposes of this study, a sample consisting of members from each of the four dormitories was not necessary. Instead, two residence halls (one from the large facility group and the other from the 'less than 100 inhabitants' category) were randomly chosen to provide the foundation for the sample of this survey.

Sample members were also randomly selected in proportion to the number of in habitants in their particular residence hall. One of the sample dormitories, Johnson Hall, has 511 residents; sample members were randomly selected consisting of every thirteenth name on the current dormitory roster. In the other sample dormitory, every fourth name on the Chalkley House roster became a sample member. A sample of 57 persons were interviewed out of the combined number of 574 students in the two dormitories, thus yeilding a 10 percent sample Since the survey deals in non-divisible entities (persons), percentages were rounded off to the nearest full percentage point. As a result, there is a possible error margin of one percentage point in the statistics arrived at within this study.

INTERVIEWS and INTERVIEWERS

The 57 interviews were conducted in respondents' dormitory rooms. The interviews were personally conducted by one student of mass communications who was also the project director. The interviews took place during the period from November 29 through December 1 in the evening hours from 6 to Midnight. In an effort to minimize bias, respondents were not told the identity of the project sponsor.

QUESTIONAIRE

This questionaire was concerned with eliciting information pertaining to respondents'preferences for the available radio stations in Richmond--in particular, WVCW, the campus radio station. Information about when and, especially where respondents listened to WVCW was also sought. Information concerning improvements and popularity of programming was also elicited. All other questions serve as filter questions. The questionaire is included at the end of the report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

For the purposes of this study, the demographic information elicited concerned with age, sex, race, school of study, and present school standing is, for the most part irrelevant. The reason being that in attempting projections in the various sex-age-race-education classifications, a sample of this size does not permit projections in such fine detail. The only demographic classification that lends itself to a study of this nature is

the respondents' place of residence, and the degree to which their board entails (do they only live on campus or do they also take their meals on campus). So for the purposes of this study we will concern ourselves only with the fact that we have a homogeneous group of dormitory students. In reference to these other classifications, a breakdown of respondents' varied characteristics appears in the General Sample Information, Tables 1-4, found near the end of the report.

Of the 57 persons interviewed in this study, all of them (100% of the sample) were aware that VCU has its own campus radio station. 92 percent of those interviewed could accurately state WVCW's location on the AM dial. In addition, everyone in the sample had, at least once, had a chance to listen to WVCW. However, only nine percent of those interviewed preferred WVCW over all other Richmond stations.

With seven percent of the sample stating no preference for any particular radio station available to them, six Richmond radio stations were mentioned in addition to WVCW. The most popular station mentioned, representing the first preference of 32 percent of the sample, was WRVQ. Running second with 18 percent of the sample listing it as their preferred station was WRXL 102. Both of these stations are FM rather than AM which could be a major factor in their favor--possibly emphasizing a preference for quality of sound above all else. Twelve percent of the sample preferred WGOE and another 12 percent preferred either WANT or WENZ over the other area stations. These three stations cater to a specialized population and provide music

and services geared solely to this segment (WGOE--progressive rock; WANT and WENZ--black oriented soul music). These three stations are AM allocations which presents the other side of the coin; for at least 24 percent of the sample, programming is the major criteria in determining preference.

In regard to when and where sample members regularly listen to WVCW, 71 percent of those interviewed stated that they only listened to the station in the cafeteria during meal times; 10 percent of these persons (four people) stated that they only listen to the station then because the monitors are on and they are forced to do so. Another 21 percent of the sample mentioned that they regularly listened to WVCW not only in the cafeteria but in their rooms and friends' rooms in the dormitory as well. It is interesting to note that 75 percent of those persons who regularly listen to the campus station at home had marked down the time segment from 2-7 a.m. as one of the times when they listened to the radio. This is a significant element considering that very few Richmond radio stations broadcast 24 hours a day. And for most students--'all-nighters' are part of the game (at least occasionally).

The remaining eight percent (5 persons) stated that occasionally they hear the station, but on the whole they don't listen to the station at all. A significant pattern developed within this eight percent. All five of these sample members were juniors, none were on the board plan (did not eat at the cafeteria), and not one of these persons could give the call numbers for the campus station.

In reference to respondents' awareness to WVCW's special programming, the most significant finding is that the most popular programs are those which coincide with daily and weekend cafeteria hours. 33 percent of the sample members were aware of the daily news report; 26 percent of the respondents were aware of the OLDIES show which broadcasts on Saturdays during lunch time; 28 percent of the sample knew about the Top 40 show which happens to coincide with Sunday lunch hour; and finally, the nostalgia show, which is broadcast during the dinner hours on Sunday evenings, left its mark on 21 percent of the sample. All other programming outside cafeteria hours ranged from an awareness degree from the entire sample of 21 percent for the Sunday evening jazz show to 10 percent for the RELAY program.

In regard to the programs offered by WVCW which do not coincide with cafeteria hours the awareness of programs by persons who regularly listen breaks down as follows:

Of the 12 sample members who regularly listen to WVCW at home as well as in the cafeteria all 12 knew about the Sunday evening jazz show; 11 out of 12 were aware of the daily preview shows; 10 knew about the Disco party on Saturday nights; 10 were familiar with the Bluegrass show on Monday nights; nine knew there was a Blues show; and eight persons had heard the contemporary music religious show on Sunday mornings; and six persons had heard RELAY.

When asked about what they would like to hear more of on WVCW most respondents had no comment. Of the 21 persons who did respond, it was a toss-up between more progressive rock, more oldies, and more classical programming. For a detailed breakdown of the wants of the listening audience see Table #7.

In summary, trying to run a college radio station that operates "in the public interest, convenience, and necessity" (when one considers the wide diversity which is entailed in the 'university public') is an extremely difficult task. In addition, for a station whose funds, which are appropriated from off-campus as well as dormitory students' activities fees) only enable it to serve less than a quarter ofthe University's dormitory population, needless to say, a very serious situation occurs. Those students who live off campus and those who live in dormitories which are not equipt with WVCW transmitters must be excluded from the WVCW public because they are not able to receive transmission even though their monies help support the radio station. Therefore, it is even more important for WVCW's programming to reflect the needs of its very select public because it is this portion of the VCU population that is reaping the benefits of the monies paid by everyone. From the information provided in this study, the inference is that 71 percent of the potential listeners only listen to WVCW in the cafeteria and prefer other stations when at home. So the question is 'Why is this the case?' The problem is only further accented when the students whose views are elicited refrain from comment. Fortunately, in the case of this study only 15 percent of the sample population (nine persons) had no comment to make about WVCW on an overall basis.

The two most numerous negative responses toward the station dealt with the non-professionalism of the announcers at WVCW and inferior technical aspects of the station. On the positive side, the most often received response was that the station serves the diverse interests of the campus community well. A

further breakdown of details on the respondents' overall impression of the station follows on the next page (labeled Question 12).

QUESTION #12

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF WVCW ON AN OVERALL BASIS?

Nine persons who responded to the questionaire had no comment to make on the subject. Of the 48 persons who had at least one response to question #12, ten persons said that they likedthe station from what they'd heard of it--one of whom said she liked the idea of having a campus station because it gave 'future disc jockeys a chance to practice.' 15 people commented that the campus radio station served the various interests of the University community well--three of these persons said they thought the station was well-run. The remark that the station was very informative came from two sample members. 11 people said the station was 'good' or 'not bad' for a small station but that they preferred FM radio; of these respondents, eight said that they thought WVCW provides bad quality reception and one said that the station has a poor grade of equiptment. Five sample members made derogatory remarks about the announcers at WVCW and said that they detracted from the programs the station offered;of these persons, one person said the weather reporting was sloppy and another said that the announcers could increase the appeal of their shows by widening the selection of artists and music they played. One person said they didn't like the station because the format varied too much. And four persons who said they either never or only rarely heard any WVCW broadcasts commented that they were impressed with what WVCW offers and that they would be interested in listening to the station more often.

GENERAL SAMPLE INFORMATION

Table 1

SEX

WOMEN	38	66%
MEN	19	33%

Table 2

RACE

WHITE	44	77%
NON-WHITE	13	23%

Table 3

SCHOOL of STUDY

EDUCATION	5	9%
MASS COMM	7	12%
MEDICAL SCI	16	28%
ARTS	13	23%
BUSINESS	8	14%
SOCIOLOGY	4	7%
UNDECIDED	4	7%

Table 4

SCHOOL STANDING

FRESHMAN	21	38%
SOPHOMORE	16	28%
JUNIOR	15	26%
SENIOR	5	8%

Table 5

PREFERRED RADIO STATION

WGOE	7	12%
WLEE	4	7%
WRVQ	18	32%
WRFK	2	3%
WENZ or WANT	7	12%
WVCW	5	9%
WRXL 102	10	18%
NO PREFERENCE	4	7%

Table 6

WHERE REGULARLY LISTEN TO WVCW

CAFETERIA	40	71%
ROOM ALSO	12	21%
DON'T LISTEN	5	8%

Table 7

QUESTION 11

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR MORE OF ON WVCW THAT IS NOT PRESENTLY INCLUDED IN THEIR BROADCAST?

NO COMMENT	36 persons
MORE CLASSICAL	4 persons
MORE OLDIES	4 persons
MORE PROGRESSIVE ROCK	4 persons
MORE SOUL	2 persons
MORE JAZZ	2 persons
MORE DISCO	1 person
LESS TOP 40	1 person
MORE BLUEGRASS	1 person
MORE NEWS	1 person
MORE INTERVIEWS WITH PERFORMERS	1 person

6. When, mainly, do you listen to WVCW? _____

_____

7. Where do you listen to WVCW? ROOM CAFETERIA BOTH

IS THERE ANY PLACE ELSE? _____

8. What type of music do you normally listen to?

BLUEGRASS/PROGRESSIVE ROCK/JAZZ/SOUL/DISCO/CLASSICAL

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE? _____

9. Are you aware that WVCW airs a daily NEWS program from 4:30-5:00? in addition to hourly reports? _____YES _____NO

Did you know WVCW airs a daily preview show highlighting new artists and new releases from 12-2A.M? _____YES _____NO

10. Are you aware that WVCW airs a WEEKLY:

[redacted] NEWS program on Sundays called RELAY concerning topics of interest in and around the campus?

_____YES _____NO

Bluegrass program Monday nights from 7-9:30? _____YES _____NO

Oldies show on Saturdays from 11 a.m.-2 p.m.? _____YES _____NO

Progressive Disco Party all night on Saturdays? _____YES _____NO

Religious programming until 11 a.m. Sun? _____YES _____NO

Predicted 'TOP 40' hits show on Sunday afternoon? _____YES _____NO

Classical Music show from 5-7 Sunday evenings? _____YES _____NO

A Sunday Jazz show til Midnight? _____YES _____NO

Blues show from midnight til 2 a.m. Sundays? _____YES _____NO

11. What would you like to hear more of on WVCW that is not presently included in their broadcast? _____

_____

12. What do you think of WVCW on an overall basis?_____

_____

_____

13. Imagine that you could listen to only one Richmond station next year. Which one would you choose?

WLEE WGOE? WVCW WRVA WRXL WANT OTHER_____

NOW WE NEED JUST A LITTLE INFORMATION ABOUT YOU TO HELP US INTERPRET YOUR ANSWERS.

What is your school standing at the present time? FRESHMAN

SOPHOMORE

JUNIOR

SENIOR

What school of study are you presently majoring in?_____

SEX: MALE

FEMALE

RACE: WHITE

NON-WHITE

ESTIMATE AGE: 17-19 20-24 25-30